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## Some of the Best Illinois High School Prose of 1958

Selected by Herbert R. Hiett and other members of the  
Department of English, Illinois State University

Each year the *Bulletin* publishes, in separate issues, some of the best poetry and some of the best prose written by Illinois students in grades 7 through 12. Teachers should begin collecting now the manuscripts they wish to submit next year. Detailed instructions will appear in the October or November *Bulletin*. A certificate is sent to each student whose writing is printed.

Additional copies of this issue are available at twenty-five cents each from IATE, 109 English Building, Urbana, Illinois. For ten or more copies the price is twenty cents each.

### A MUSKET IN THE TEAPOT

A touching story, as written by any prominent English female author, such as Katherine Mansfield.

Eloise was happy, happy as only a woman could be happy. She was very happy.

She looked at the people hurrying by in the street. They weren't happy. But she was happy, so happy. She started down the steps of the library where she was assistant librarian. She was so happy that she danced down the steps. She was so happy that she missed the last four steps completely and fell over the railing into the peony bed. She loved peonies.

Ten minutes later Eloise happily staggered up the front steps of her house. It was a nice house, a lovely house. It was so nice.

There was the door. Yes, it was the door. She was so happy she had hardly recognized it. And there was the wrought iron railing. She loved that railing. She loved it so much that she felt she must slide down it.

"I'm so happy," she thought as her heel caught in the ornamental work of the railing. She made a happy loop in the air and landed in the pansies. Pansies were so nice at this time of the year.

Eloise whirled across the lawn, oblivious to the stares of passersby. She was the goddess of Spring, only it was summer. Gleefully she tripped over a lawn chair and sat in the bird bath. She didn't mind; the water was warm.

"My God, Eloise, what the devil are you doing?"

It was her husband, Parker. He was standing by the French doors. Those doors certainly were nice.

"Oh, I'm so happy, Parker!"

"Well, what the devil are you happy about? Come in here, before your tea freezes over."

That was what she liked about Parker. He was so understanding and so happy.

She went in and, throwing her coat in the fireplace, sat in Parker's lap.

"Get the devil off me!"

"Oh, Parker," she said, as she went across the room and sat on the sideboard, "I've been so happy today."

She rearranged the tea service in her lap. It was so silver and so nice.

"It all began when I was straightening the books this morning. I had just knocked over the card file and all of a sudden I felt so happy. I've felt happy all day. I'm so happy."

Eloise got up and poured her tea in the cigarette humidor.

"Parker, can't you understand?" she said, as she lit a soggy cigarette. "I'm so happy. It's just . . . Well, you know . . . I'm so . . . Well. . . ."

"My dear," said Parker in an understanding tone. "I haven't the faintest idea what it is you're talking about."

A tear rolled down Eloise's cheek; she didn't let Parker see it. After all, she was a woman. But, she wasn't happy any longer.

The End (Thank Heavens)

BILL DODGE, twelfth grade, Arlington Heights H. S.  
Virginia Harrod, teacher

## DESTINY

Ten-nine-eight, the impersonal voice of the loudspeaker intoned monotonously, three-two-one-zero! As the awesome cloud towered skyward, bilious smoke and flames flared from its murky depths, and within its mushroom conformity civilization was obliterated from the face of the Earth. A day before, the Earth had been a place of bustling cities, productive green lands, cool waters, lofty pinnacles, and gently rolling hills. Now, through mists of acrid fumes and scorching heat, the Earth lay still and barren. Great scars and cruel fissures, charred soil and crumbling cinders blanketed the farmlands. The salt waters writhed and seethed, and the churning flood hissed as poisonous vapors rose from its surface in angry streamers. Steel girders, twisted as by a madman, stretched bare fingers beseechingly in mad patterns in the great mazes of destruction that had been cities. The land lay desolate and smouldering, illuminated with faint sunlight almost obscured by a dense curtain of radioactive dust. The once-productive world, a mammoth creature of steel and sod, lay inert in the grip of death. The day of vengeance had come—and passed. Now the Earth lay still.

But in the midst of desolation, man had survived. A pitiful few met the new day and surveyed their world. Men, and yet not men, were these woeful remnants. Savages, ignorant primitives, with minds warped by atomic radiation. Precarious at best were their chances of survival as they eked out an existence from the barren Earth. These struggling remnants of past glory, with the inherent tenacity of man, survived, and the immense work of rehabilitation was begun.

They were a vital link in the ultimate plan, these men, and they lived and grew stronger on an Earth which was becoming green and fertile once more. New knowledge was acquired, knowledge of fire and wheels, hunting and modes of protection. They developed weapons and learned to use them well, used them for protection against wild animals, and against other men. Each small clan appointed leaders, and gradually these clans settled together, and small villages resulted. The settlements grew as the men gained in knowledge and became the forerunners of great cities. Armies were organized and equipped with javelins, bows, and slings.

With the passing eons the primitive weapons became more efficient, more perfect, and more lethal. Gradually a great age of science dawned. Radar and sonar were developed. Huge battle-ships plowed the seas into submission, and silver planes knifed



through the conquered heavens. These soon became obsolete and were replaced by grim submarines which, prowling in the shadowy fathoms, often did not see the light of day for months and years on end. Missiles, rockets, and artificial satellites defied gravity and the confines of the Earth.

Old age had yielded to new drugs, and the mysteries of genetics were swiftly being unraveled. Wood and metals had been replaced by newly developed plastics. Atomic energy was harnessed, and atomic weapons were perfected. Diseases were conquered, distance was conquered, and space travel was imminent.

The dreams of mankind were swiftly being realized. Wonderful dreams, dreams which had haunted men for millions of years. Visions of power, of wealth, of scientific achievement; dreams of a world of leisure, beautiful and powerful. Day by day new principles were put into practical usage, tributes to the adroitness and perspicacity of men. They longed for knowledge and gained knowledge, and their abilities and power admitted no limits. Mankind was approaching its long-sought pinnacle.

Ten-nine-eight, the impersonal voice intoned, three-two-one—and man returned to his destiny.

HELEN SHERLOCK, eleventh grade, Bloom Twp. H. S.  
Chicago Heights  
Sara J. Fernald, teacher

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### THE DANCERS

On a summer night as I lie in bed before I go to sleep, I see a myriad of graceful patterns etched darkly on my wall. They dance like elfin ballerinas to the twinkling music of their clan. The shadows form lovely sylvan forests for my dancers as they twirl in time to the night sounds. The summer breeze, soft and sweet, plays with the rustling curtains at my window. And as my little dancers twirl ever slower, I find my head drifting with their dance; and settling back under my thin coverlet, I go to join them in their play.

LINDA LEE BALL, twelfth grade, Bloomington H. S.  
Dorothy Morin, teacher

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### THE TIN HORSE

I remember when I first met him, many years ago. I was a young child, no doubt under six at the time, and I was unlike many other girls my own age. While the other sweet angels fondled dolls, I caressed guns, holsters, and tin horses. In fact,

it was a tin horse that brought us together that day, and I don't think we've ever been apart since, except, perhaps, in rare, fleeting moments.

That day was sunny, warm, and delightfully mine. The summers of my childhood were always long and always warm, and this was an artist's day. Everything mattered to me then and excitement was a passion, even if it was only a trip to the dime store in the car. Yes, that was an event for me; most likely it was a perspiring chore for Mom, who had probably loathed the thought of driving and of battling an afternoon crowd, when comfort, fans, and Kool Aid were to be had at home. Nevertheless, households must be run and one can't leave the kiddies at home, 90 degrees or not!

The dime store was a paradise! Every pleasure imaginable existed at the counter marked "toys." There were coloring books, cut-out books, paste-m-books and comic books, innumerable species of rubber balls, toy airplanes, and yo-yos. And best of all, there was an entire section devoted to the miniature horses, Indians, and cowboys I loved so much. Mom let me linger at this heaven while she hurriedly bought dishrags, emery boards, and bobby pins. There was no air-conditioning in the store and Mom was suffocating. I saw and breathed things differently because there is cooler air towards the floor and I was in no hurry to take leave of my seldom-had entertainment. Unfortunately, Mother didn't see it my way at all, and tug as I might, I was no competition for the Kool Aid waiting at home. I was slowly dragged away from the counter, but not before my greedy little fingers had snatched a shiny black tin horse from the shelf. The three of us (the horse, Mom, and me) seemingly whirled from the hot store, down the hot sidewalk and into the hotter car. Mother awaited the Kool Aid and I awaited the cool basement floor and the thrill I'd have when I'd place the fine new horse with the rest of my herd.

But I discovered then just why even petty larceny doesn't pay. For it was then that I met him, face to face. My small mind knew fear and my stubby fingers were clammy and cold. My mother had instilled in me a fear of him even if I didn't realize that force at the time. But it *was* a force, a force that yanked me out of the car and magnetically pulled me to the toy counter again. It was he who put the horse back on the rack and it was he who put the contented smile of relief on my face. Yes, I'd met for the first time the force men dread. I'd met my conscience.

LOUISE RODMAN, Morgan Park H. S., Chicago  
William Mohr, teacher

## THE QUEST

The man pulled and tugged to try to free himself from his deathhouse of slime, but with each convulsive effort he was pulled deeper into its depths. At last he relaxed from his fight for a moment and surveyed his surroundings.

The small pool of quicksand lay in a tiny clearing surrounded by the lush green leaves of shrubs and wild plants. Higher up, the leaves of silver maples, elms, and oaks, turned and twisted in the gentle wind. Far to the east, barely visible to the man, was a range of hills, from behind which the sun would rise in about an hour.

"How quaint," he mused to himself. "I'll die about sunrise." With a final lurch to free himself, the man found that he had succeeded only in further burying himself. The end would come soon, he thought, and he looked around him once more. Somehow the trees looked more majestic as they stood framed against a background of deep blue than they ever had before. The chirpings of the birds seemed more melodious. The night air was definitely more cooling, and the stars brighter. "It is a good world," he thought, "a very good world. It's funny that I never noticed it before."

It *was* a good world, and he *would* hate to leave it.

"The condemned ate a hearty meal," he said bitterly, but try as he might, he couldn't remember what he had eaten last. He hoped that he would see the sun rise.

"If only I could tell them," he thought, "what they are missing. If only I could make them open their eyes and see." But they would have to find it out for themselves. It was too late now for him.

His eyes strained to the east for a glimmer of gold against the clouds, but there was none. He was surprised that he was not afraid to die. He felt no fear, nothing but a deep regret.

The quicksand enveloped him almost to his nostrils, and he knew it was merely a matter of minutes. Still he looked hopefully toward the east for the first rays of the rising sun. Still those rays did not appear. He shut his eyes.

The sun rose. It rose on the forest, where animals began to scurry about in their never-ending search for food. It rose on the city, where men began to scurry about in their never-ending search for money. And it rose on a small clearing surrounded by



shrubs and trees. And it rose on a silent pool, and the gentle wind stirred its empty surface.

STEPHEN JOHN SALCHENBERGER, twelfth grade, Senn H. S.,  
Chicago  
Grace A. Lindahl, teacher

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### THE LITTLEST DEVIL

On earth Mark had been a terror! All of the neighborhood children had suffered under his blows. His mother was forever telling him to keep away from the baby, to stop pushing out the eyes of the girls' dolls, or to stop trying to drown the cat. It was no different now that he was in the land of brimstone and fire. He played tricks on all the other devils. He bent their pitchforks, tied their tails in knots, tilted their horns, and did many other mean things.

He had not been in the land of devils over a month, when he was ordered, with the help of a few pricks of a pitchfork, to appear before the big head devil. Now, Mark was not afraid of anything, but one look at the big figure towering in front of him, wearing luminous red, made his knees begin to shake. The big devil motioned Mark to come closer. Mark hesitantly came closer. The devil explained that Christmas was only a few days away and that the devils' main interest was to torment the angels, while they polished the stars and cleaned the windows of Heaven. Mark's job was to think up new tricks to play on the angels. The devil laughed, saying, "Those poor angels won't know what to expect!" . . .

CAROL DIXON, tenth grade, MacArthur H. S., Decatur  
Mrs. Schory, teacher

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### CHRISTMAS IS FOR FATHERS

I have come to a bitter conclusion. Christmas is not for children; it is for fathers! The reason I know is because I have had a sad experience. My name is Johnny and I am seven years old. My father is practically an old man. I think he is almost 30!

It all began when my father took me down to Sheffield's Department Store to see Santa Claus. As soon as we got into the toy department, I tugged on his sleeve and said, "Come on, Daddy, and I'll show you what I want Santa Claus to bring me. I want

a Captain Saturn space suit! It has a great big plastic helmet, an atomic suit, and a disintegrator ray gun that shoots *real sparks!* Come on, Daddy! Daddy? Daddy!"

It was useless. He was in another world. He grabbed my hand and pulled me in the opposite direction. "But Daddy," I pleaded, "The Captain Saturn space suits are over here!"

By this time he had reached his destination—the electric train table. His eyes lit up, and I could tell what he was going to say before he even opened his mouth. "Son, wouldn't it be nice if Santa brought you an electric train? When I was your age, all I ever wanted . . ."

"I want a Captain Saturn space suit!"

"Now, son, think of the fun I-er-we could have with a train. There's a perfect place for it in the playroom."

"But I don't want a train. I want a . . ." I gave up. I could see he wasn't even listening to me. I sure didn't want a train! Billy had one, and his father played with it more than he did! Anyway, an old train wasn't as much fun as a Captain Saturn space suit! I watched Captain Saturn every day on television, and he always had such thrilling adventures! That's why I wanted a space suit. If I had one, I could pretend I was Captain Saturn and have all those adventures, too! Phooey, who wanted a train! Not me!

I must have waited about ten hours—well *almost* ten hours—and finally I said, "Daddy, can I please go talk to Santa Claus? That's what we came for, remember?"

"Huh? Oh, Santa Claus! Well, let's go. Say, aren't those trains something?"

"Yes, Daddy, but I *still* want a C . . . ."

"Now, son, I'm sure you'll be quite happy with whatever you get. WON'T you?"

"Yes, Daddy." From the tone of his voice, I figured I'd better say yes.

By this time I was practically on Santa's lap. "Well, well, my little man," he boomed out, "what do you want Santa to bring you for Christmas?"

"I want a Cap....."

"He wants an electric train, don't you, son?" put in my father.

"Well, well," exclaimed Santa, "that's just fine!"

"But," I put in feebly. Then I gave up. I was outnumbered two to one! "Yes, sir," I said meekly.

"Well, well! Just wait until Christmas and see! By the way, have you been a good boy?"



"Yes, sir."

"Do you always eat all of your spinach?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, well! Just wait until Christmas, little man! Merry Christmas! Ho, Ho!"

And sure enough, on Christmas morning, what to my surprise was under the tree, but an electric train. I wasn't exactly overjoyed, but I pretended to be. Yes, sir, I really put on a show! I acted like an electric train was all I had ever wanted. And I don't *really* mind that I never got my Captain Saturn space suit. After all, Christmas *is* for fathers!

GEORGANNE RENTAS, tenth grade, MacArthur H. S., Decatur  
Mrs. Schory, teacher

### BOBBUM

It has been seven years, but I still remember Bobbum as a tall, gray haired lady with soft brown eyes. She was my grandmother, but from the time I was able to talk she has been "Bobbum" to me. Bobbum is gone now and someone else lives in the big brick house on the highway, but I still remember her, and the hours of the days when I was very young.

Sometimes during the long summer afternoons it would storm, and afterwards we would sit on the back porch and listen to the rainbird calling from the giant oak tree across the back yard. The trees stood tall against the purple sky; the yellow sun shone on the clean wetness. "Can you smell the rain?" she would ask.

"Yes," I would say.

Her gray-sprinkled white hair fascinated me. She stood sometimes in her room with the shades pulled and ran a brush through it. Then she rolled it up and stuck innumerable hairpins into it. How it stayed up so neatly was always a mystery.

Sometimes she would sit in the rocker in the upstairs bedroom and read to me. I sat on the green blanket of the bed as she read about Cain and Abel, Isaac and Abraham, Jacob and others from an old Bible history. I listened wonderingly to these stories as long as she would read.

She would be sitting in the living room resting. "Let's go for a walk, Bobbum," I would plead.

Patiently she would say, "Wait'll I get my breath." Then in a moment she would push herself up from the couch in an old

woman way, take my hand, and walk with me through the kitchen and out the back door.

Sometimes she performed a delightful ritual on boring afternoons. First I washed my hands and dried them. Then she took a bottle of hand lotion and poured a satiny white pool into my cupped hands. When that was rubbed in, she poured a few fragrant drops of apple blossom toilet water into my palms, then just a little talcum powder for smoothness. How luxurious and glamorous I felt!

Once in a while we sat on the side porch and watched the cars go by on the highway, and counted the ones of each color. We looked at her rubber plant with its giant smooth green leaves. Sometimes we just walked through the yard, looking at the rose-bushes and the trees and birds and squirrels.

One morning when I came downstairs, Bobbum was on the couch. Mother and Dad were up, too. Bobbum was sick, and soon she went to the hospital. She came home finally, but it was not the same. Bobbum slept upstairs now to be away from the noise, and she almost never walked around any more. She became the old woman in the rocker upstairs who rang a bell when she wanted something, or was lonely. But I didn't know she was lonely, and I soon came to hate the sound of the bell.

I awoke in the night to hear her calling "James, James!" for my father. A light would come on; there would be footsteps and voices. Then darkness again and I would fall asleep.

We talked sometimes, but I liked more to play with my brothers downstairs.

"Rub my back a little," she would ask, and I would get the alcohol and rub her smooth bent shoulders for a time. And soon I would leave. Again she went to the hospital, then home, then back again.

One gray evening in early May I was walking to a Brownie Scout meeting when Mother pulled up beside me in the car. "Come here, Honey," she called.

"But I'm going to Brownies," I protested.

"I know, but we want you to come home now." I went to the car. "You see," Mother said, "Bobbum's dead."

Unbelievably, I climbed into the car. "Oh no!" I cried, and collapsed into tears.

At home that night I lay on the bed in her old room and sobbed in the twilight. In the kitchen someone was cooking supper as I lay thinking of death and of Bobbum. It means, I thought, that she'll never talk to me again.

Today I stop and talk to the old woman in the office beside ours because I remember Bobbum. Because of Bobbum I visit old people here and there and listen to them talk about other times. I wonder what she would say if she could see me now, and this town, and the woods again. "Whose little girl are you?" I can hear her ask.

"Yours, Bobbum."

MARY CONOUR, twelfth grade, East Richland H. S.  
Margaret Giffin, teacher

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### GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE

In my childhood days, nothing quite equalled the magic of a visit to Grandmother's house. It was a house linked to other days and to another way of living, a two-story Georgian structure set square in the middle of half an acre of lawn. To the small child I was in those days, everything about the house was huge and grand. The house itself loomed square and white, an iced wedding cake with little scallops of frosting along the roof line. The pillars of the long front porch marched across the face of the house like trim soldiers on parade. Oblong windows, emerald cut, formed neat geometric patterns around the house, their green shutters boxing them tidily in.

Yes, I always loved the visits to Grandmother's house, and feel a little sorry for the child who has never known the magic of exploring one of these old houses, who has never lived intimately with space, and never felt the leisurely living generated by such dwellings. Since we knew the joy of unbridled imagination and had the room in which to exercise it, our visits to Grandmother's house have always paid rich dividends.

VIVIAN McMULLIN, East Moline H. S.

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### LOOK HOMEWARD, ANGER

I slammed the door with a vicious kick, feeling with satisfaction the vibrating floor and shocked walls. A side glance revealed my room careening carelessly in the startled wall mirror. I stomped up and down a few times and dived onto the bed. . . . No hot tears . . . just heavy breathing. My fingers dug into the candle-wick bedspread, punishing it for all the injustices. If only I could live somewhere else—away from parents, and family, and—every-



thing. I checked my cunning schemes of women's foreign legions and swank penthouses long enough to admit a few choice friends into my heaven of revenge.

I swung my shoulders over the sides of the bed and felt the blood surging as the top of my head touched the floor. Looking at things upside down seemed appropriate. All I could see was the floor and the underside of the bed. Then I saw a ball of lint and hated it. I saw a stray bobby pin and hated that. Forgetting that I was upside down, I tried to flick the bobby pin and rolled awkwardly off the bed.

I lay on the floor examining the ceiling while I tried to recall what had vexed me. Ceiling paint couldn't cover up the defects of the wallpapering done by the previous tenants. There were wrinkles along the place where the roof slanted down and cut off an edge of the room. I could see the places where the strips of wallpaper had overlapped. There were lines of shadow where the studs and nails crossed the ceiling. I hated the lines. I could remember being bothered by them when I was sick once. I had had the flu and was too sick to sit up, so I had lain there and counted the shadows of those nails.

The floor seemed to become cold during my ceiling-study. I got up slowly and plopped down on the bed again. My hands were tingling . . . perhaps they were cold.

The winter sun smiled palely through my windows and curtains. Silly old window! Too big for normal-sized blinds . . . awkward to raise from any position. . . . I felt briefly annoyed at its inadequacies. Strange, how the light came through those pink curtains. . . . The sun had faded part of the curtains while the part covering the wall had remained pink. I wondered how many times I had noticed them—every morning, every time I adjusted the blind, whenever I had been ill.

It was on St. Patrick's Day I had had my appendix out. The ambulance men had picked me out of this very bed and put me on a stretcher. How could they lift a person by the arms and legs and keep him so rigid? All those worried people had been around my bed—white and anxious. Those people had been there when I had the measles, too. They had tried to keep my temperature down while it rose, relentlessly, up to 105°.

This same winter sun had shone in on various convalescences and other solitary moments. I had read so many books here. How much had I learned? Many doors had opened as I read in this room at my desk or in bed. I would come home, flop on my bed,

and read for hours. After one of these sessions, I would come out of my room with a dazed, involved expression on my face.

Silly old room! It had been almost a friend—a welcoming refuge and escape. I looked fondly at the pile of clothes, cologne bottles, photographs, miscellaneous junk on my bureau; at the scholarly disorder of my desk. I glanced affectionately at my clock-radio, a birthday present from my parents. I proudly examined my record-player, bought with baby-sitting money. My bulging bookcases and wrought-iron lamp stared amiably back at me. At last, my eye came to rest on the wall mirror; it was tilted to the right, away from the door. With the long overdue arrival of hot tears, I rediscovered . . . home.

MONICA PANNWITT, twelfth grade, Evanston Twp. H. S.  
Clarence W. Hach, teacher

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### THE DECISION

All he could see was his ten bony toes, covered with wet sand and dirt. All he could hear was the continual, "One . . . two . . . three . . . four . . ." whispered by the young man kneeling not ten feet in front of him. All he could feel was the glare of dozens of pairs of eyes. Jimmy stood motionless on the weedy grass near the lake. He knew that only ten minutes ago he and Terry had been playing together on the pier, and now Terry was lying on his stomach with some men pushing down on his back and counting, "one . . . two . . . three . . . four . . ." He was oblivious to all else except his dirty, bony toes and the dozens of pairs of eyes. I was only trying to help, Jimmy thought. People always said that if someone didn't know how to swim you should push him in and he'd learn. He was only trying to help Terry learn to swim! He dared not move any part of his body because of the watching eyes. It was true that Terry did fall in the lake, but Jimmy hadn't told anyone that he had pushed him in. It hadn't been a very hard push, though, he thought. Terry just lost his balance; he did fall in!

"Why doesn't that inhalator squad hurry?" sobbed Mrs. Martin. "Can't we do something to make them hurry?" It couldn't be true, she told herself. Terry wasn't really dying. Of course not. This was the beginning of a wonderful vacation—the vacation they had been looking forward to all year: two weeks of leisure with the family. And Terry had been so excited about it. "Are we going way up north?" he had asked her countless times.

She had always replied, "Yes, Terry, way up to the north woods where all you can see for miles are pine trees and beautiful lakes."

"And is that where the Indians used to live?" he'd ask.

"All different kinds," she had answered. "And they used to hunt and fish right where the cabins are now." Terry then built a tepee in the backyard out of some clothespoles and an old paint-splattered tarpaulin. She recalled how she had scolded him when he hollered like an Indian. For days all he talked about was how jealous the boys would be when he brought real flint arrowheads back to the Cub Scout meetings. He might even get an extra badge or medal or something. And then he asked her how long they would be gone and when she answered two weeks, he began to worry about how lonely it might be. He begged her to let Jimmy come along with them. She hadn't thought too much of the idea, she recalled, but Terry had pleaded and her husband thought it was all right. Mrs. Martin had worried about the responsibility in taking Jimmy. Now she thought of the ironic twist, for there, lying on the ground, was her Terry. She wondered why she had consented to bring Jimmy along. If the two hadn't been playing together, Terry might never have been on the pier and he never would have . . . they were probably playing a silly game. But she had told the boys to be careful and not to go out to the deep end of the pier. Maybe they had had a fight or something. She turned her head and glanced hatefully at the young boy who stood on the grass, wiggling his toes and staring at his feet.

The hot sun made Jimmy's head tingle. He wanted to scratch but he didn't dare; he felt the eyes on him. Instead he twisted his thumbs behind him. He heard the rhythmic "one . . . two . . . three . . . four . . ." Jimmy wished that Terry would jump up and say, "Ha, ha, I was only fooling," and they would run off and play again. But he could still hear the man counting, and he wondered why the man was counting. Maybe after he counted four, five, or six hundred times, Terry would be better. Jimmy's legs ached from standing still and he shifted his weight from one foot to the other. Then he thought that maybe Terry would hear the man better if he kept repeating the same words. Jimmy was hungry. He wondered what Mrs. Martin would have for supper. He wondered if Terry would be up by then or if the man would still be counting one, two, three, four. He hoped that he wouldn't get a spanking from Mr. Martin. But why should he? he thought. He wouldn't tell them he had pushed Terry in. Terry would tell



on him, though. He know that when Terry woke up he would cry and tell his mother that Jimmy pushed him off the pier; Terry was a cry-baby. Jimmy thought that maybe he should tell the truth after all.

" . . . One . . . two . . . three . . . four . . . " The life-guard rose up and down. The sun was hot and he was breathing hard and his body groaned. I wish the kid would snap out of it, he thought. He looked anxiously at his watch and wondered why the inhalator squad didn't hurry. He glanced at Terry's face and thought . . . Poor little guy! He looks awfully pale. It would sure be a shame if . . . Darn kids!! Why do they have to fool around on a fishing pier anyway? If he doesn't pull through, I'll take that other kid and knock some sense into him. He continued with the movements on Terry's back.

I must be calm about this, Mr. Martin told himself. Everything is going to be all right; they'll have the truck out here any minute. He thought of the new fishing equipment he had bought for Terry and how he had planned to teach him how to use it. He thought of how he had got Terry away from those rowdy friends of his, except Jimmy. Mr. Martin liked Jimmy; he was a sensible boy. He thought of how, at last, he had the chance to get away from his job and enjoy his family. Nothing could happen to spoil it now. He lit a cigarette and paced back and forth on the grass. If that truck would only come! What was keeping it?

Jimmy wondered what to do; he felt uneasy just standing there, but he didn't know where to go. He wished his mother were there, but she wasn't. He wanted to run away, but he was afraid he couldn't find his way home. He wished that Terry would hurry and wake up. " . . . one . . . two . . . three . . . four . . . " That man must certainly be up to five thousand by this time, he thought. He wondered what the Martins would say when Terry told them that Jimmy pushed him into the lake. It would be hard to tell Terry's parents that he pushed him in, but it was better than having Terry tell them later. He dropped his hands at his sides and straightened his legs. He lifted his head and looked over at Mrs. Martin, who was staring at him. I'd better tell her now, he thought.

A siren pierced the silence of the crowd and everyone looked up. The inhalator squad had come at last! All at once there was a mass of confusion, with men carrying funny looking instruments about Terry and moving him around. One of these men turned him over and felt his arm and then with another instrument he felt his chest for what seemed a long time. Finally, Jimmy saw

him nod to the other men and all activity stopped. Jimmy thought, Terry will now get up and tell on me. He ran over to Mrs. Martin and she started crying aloud. Mr. Martin came over and put his arm around her; he was crying, too. This was the first time that Jimmy had ever seen a man cry. All the people around were turning away and many of the ladies were crying. The men covered Terry with a cloth and put him in the ambulance. Jimmy didn't understand what all the people were doing. He was going to ask Mrs. Martin if they were taking Terry to the hospital, but she was still crying on Mr. Martin's arm. The ambulance drove away and Mr. and Mrs. Martin got into another car and followed it. Most of the people were gone.

"Hey, Kid, come on! I'll buy you an ice cream cone," said the voice beside Jimmy. He looked up and saw the man who had given Terry artificial respiration. "Too bad about your pal, Kid. He should have known better than to rush out on the pier all by himself when he didn't know how to swim." He started walking up the road. Jimmy followed him with silent steps . . . one . . . two . . . three . . . four . . .

ELENA PAPPAS, eleventh grade, Evanston Twp. H. S.  
David R. Perry, teacher

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## TRAVEL

I love travel. Escapism? Perhaps. But I like peach trees and Mexican food, and green copper hills, and drying cornstalks. I don't mind exhaust fumes of the bus ahead, the clank-bang over a manhole cover, or even the nervous hum of wheels in soft shoulders. I forget that my ears ever popped or that "No vacancy" signs exist. I forget the endless procession of pines and red clay, the stifling heat, and burned brakes. Say "travel" and I'll pack.

I like the smells of travel. Drive through Citrus County, Florida, at the right time of year and the almost sickeningly sweet perfume of orange blossoms will haunt you. Tarpon Springs, known for its sponge fishermen, will greet you in the form of a swarthy Greek waiter in a cloud of cheeses, olive oil, and garlic. Or drive up into the Rockies and breathe deeply of the fir incense, unpacked, there for the taking.

I like the sounds of travel. The swish of a passing car on a wet road, the nothingness of a deserted highway, and the midnight whistle of a distant train heard in a strange motel seem to linger in the mind forever.

And, of course, I like the sights, the glimpses and panoramic views of life which only a traveler may see. I vividly remember the docks of New Orleans and those of Jacksonville, the tractors, steel, and bananas picked up and carried by gigantic jointed arms, the strong black men in greasy shirts, and the oil on the cement floor of the landing pier. I can still see the frightfully desolate Nevada ghost towns, the broken windows, deserted streets, and dead quiet. I remember the cotton pickers with their long "basket-aprons" and their slow procession across the red earth of Georgia. I can see the ubiquitous Burma Shave signs and the orange roofs of Howard Johnsons. Hung beside the road in North Carolina I see the brightly colored, flapping blankets of the Cherokee Indians. I see the endless pines of Florida and the oil pumps of Texas, the deep blue of Lake Tahoe, and the black skeletons in Gary.

I like everything about travel, even its discomforts.

VALERIE LAWRENCE, eleventh grade, Evanston Twp. H. S.  
Edith L. Baumann, teacher

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### NEGATIVE MODERN LITERATURE

Gone are the days of the cheerful author. Novelists, playwrights, poets, and essayists are cynical, pessimistic, and downright discouraging about the world we live in. The common denominator of most modern literature is an essentially negative attitude.

Novelists bitterly discuss the present as full of unchangeable evil and treat the future as inevitably too horrible to contemplate—although contemplate it they do, taking a fanatic and sadistic pleasure in making others as miserable as themselves. Earlier novelists, such as Charles Dickens, painted pictures of evil and misery. But the purpose of their novels was to improve such conditions. Present day novelists are wallowing in filth, throwing it in people's faces, and then taunting them with a cry of "You can't wash yourselves clean. It won't ever come off!"

The intent of *The Grapes of Wrath* is to move the reader to do something about the evils John Steinbeck describes. Instead, he leaves little hope for the characters or his readers. His picture is so despairing that it seems calculated to cause the reader to end his life in such a world rather than to improve that world a little. Instead of taking a positive approach by saying "Here is a great wrong we must right," the modern novelist is saying "The world is rotten. Nothing can change it!"

The playwright's approach to life is no more cheerful. The



realism of Ibsen is running away with the modern dramatist. Certainly naturalism is effective on the stage. It is a technique calculated to obtain a great emotional response from an audience. An occasional bitter play may well shock an audience into doing something about the evils it has witnessed. But when a major portion of a nation's serious drama is negative, the shock effect which worked so well for Ibsen is no longer possible. The audience comes to expect it. "A play is supposed to mirror reality," spectators think. "Well, the play is depressing, but so is life." Instead of doing something about the evil, the audience becomes conditioned to live with it. The plays of Williams, O'Neill, and Miller individually may be excellent. However, when the American public has a steady diet of *Orpheus Descending*, *The Ice-Man Cometh*, and *Death of a Salesman*, it is not surprising that it reacts in a negative fashion.

Like novelists and playwrights, the disillusioned poets of the twentieth century are violently negative. Bertolt Brecht, T. S. Eliot, and W. H. Auden have been teaching their fellow men to hate a world that will be forever despicable. Brecht writes concerning people, "I say: they're strangely stinking animals. And I say: no matter, I am, too." Brecht tolerates ugliness, while Eliot and Auden bemoan men whose lives are hollow and meaningless. The amusing element of Auden's "The Unknown Citizen" simply makes it a little less painful than Eliot's "The Waste Land."

Many readers may benefit from the truth to be found in all three poems. But truth in one poem becomes the futile wail of a cry-baby when every poet attempts to write another "Waste Land." Unfortunately, many aspiring poets seem to think that because T. S. Eliot has written negative poetry every poet must adopt his attitude in order to achieve a similar success. Therefore, negative poetry seems to be the fashion; optimism and constructive criticism are labeled naivete.

The modern essayist is negative too. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World Revisited* thoroughly alarms the public. Then the chapter "What Can Be Done?" leaves people the answer "Nothing!" Too many modern essayists are not worthy of the essay. Would that even a few would take a positive view! It is so easy to find fault with the world. Judging from the modern essay, it is a much more difficult task to devise a method for improvement.

Must the modern author leave us with the feeling that there is nothing worth living for? It is not necessary to return to the pastoral poem or the rose-colored novel. The revision can be made by simply injecting a note of optimism into at least a portion of

contemporary literature. Criticize the world, but also show us what we can do to improve it!

TISH SKINNER, twelfth grade, Glenbrook H. S.  
Wayne Siek, teacher

### SIC TRANSIT GLORIA

(Written after reading Edith Hamilton's *Mythology*)

There once lived a young and splendid prince named Abraham Fuller. He was heir to a fine kingdom, that of Fuller & Fuller, makers of fine furniture. He was clean of limb and fast of foot. And all the world lay before him.

When Abraham reached the age of eighteen, he decided to go out into the world and do some great deed. And so it was that, over the opposition of his father, Abraham prepared himself for the long and arduous journey to that place of the gods, where mortals fear to tread, Madison Avenue. The preparations for this momentous journey included fasting, consultation with the gods, and the tattooing of an eagle on Abraham's left hand. Thus prepared he set forth on the good ship "Scenicruiser."

Abraham's vessel docked at the port of Grand Central. He then set forth on the long perilous journey overland to the supreme castle of the gods, Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborne.

The first danger Abraham encountered was crossing the land of Street. This place abounded with horrible, growling, chromeplated monsters, slaving for the blood of any innocent traveler. Abraham traversed this land safely through a clever subterfuge. He disguised himself as one of the minor deities of the land, known as cops. The inhabitants gave him a wide berth.

Abraham should now have made the journey to the palace of the gods without incident. However, in disguising himself as a cop, he incurred the displeasure of the head of his group of deities. This chieftain, known as Commissioner, changed his form to that of a nymph and directed Abraham on a roundabout course that took him past the abode of the sirens.

As Abraham, all unknowing, drew nearer to this accursed place, his feet seemed to lighten, and a sense of giddiness, or power, possessed him. Then he heard a sweet song wafted on breezes of neon. He came to a huge shiny enclosure, and the sirens' song beckoned him inward. Some warning made him pull back, but the indescribable sweetness of the song pulled him forward again. Once more Abraham made an effort to pull

back, but the song drew him on. "Buy now—pay later," it whispered. And Abraham marched forward step by step to disaster. Abraham's foot lifted to cross the threshold, and then the sweet song cracked and broke into hideous laughter. The spell was broken. Abraham turned and ran down the road as fast as he could. Curses followed him, and he kept going until he could hear them no more.

Abraham arrived at the castle of the gods without further incident, and walked through the gates and entered a courtyard where a satyr was chasing an elderly nymph. They both regarded him with expressions of hostility. So he continued on into the castle. There he was made welcome, and there he dwelt with the gods for more than a year.

He would have been content to stay with the glittering and beautiful gods forever, but he could not, for they were no longer there to stay with. One day, the tattoos flew from every hand, and the filters dropped from every cigarette. The false gods had faded away, and Abraham was repentant.

Abraham went home to Fuller & Fuller. He looked back as he went, and where the castle and the gods had been were only shards. He came to the place of the sirens, and there stood only a stand selling hot dogs.

Abraham took command of his father's kingdom, made fine furniture, and forgot the gods. The world glittered no more.

DAVID NEXON, ninth grade, Glenbrook H. S.  
Charles B. Ruggless, teacher

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## GROWING UP

"Sandy Hamilton wanted at the office," she announced.

I wasn't scared—calls to the office never made my heart flutter. They always turned out to be ordinary things like some typing Mr. Hewitt wanted me to do or Mother calling to remind me of a dentist appointment.

"Sit down, Sandy." Mr. Hewitt said, looking oddly uneasy for a long-time friend. "I really hate to tell you this—I don't know how," he was obviously embarrassed. "Your brother just called on the phone . . ." he floundered but went on; "your father died this morning. He had a heart attack at his office about eleven o'clock. Bob said he was gone before the doctor could arrive—I'm sorry, very sorry."

He broke off and looked at me again. I could only wonder



what he wanted me to say. "I guess I'd better go home," I said getting up.

"Well, yes—now if there's anything at all we can do."

"Thanks," I said.

I saw my friends look at me curiously as I went to my locker; evidently the rumor was already passing around.

Bob opened the door hastily as I reached the front porch; he must have been watching for me.

"Where is Dad?" I blurted out.

"They took him to Foster's Funeral Home. I took care of that." Mom and Aunt Mary were sitting in the living room. Aunt Mary was sobbing loudly and my mother was crying softly. I was panic stricken and overcome by the shame that overtakes me when any grownup lets his emotions take hand.

"Sandy, honey, come to me," Mom whispered.

When I walked over, she put her head down on my shoulder. I stiffened; I couldn't help hating this foolish play of emotions. After an uncomfortable moment, I gently drew away.

The phone rang, shattering the heavy silence, and Bob answered it. I was totally irritated by the courteous replies he was giving.

"Yes, it was quite sudden . . . the funeral will be Wednesday."

"My God, Bob, you sound like an undertaker," I said when he re-entered the dreary den.

Bob turned red, and he looked so miserable I could have hit myself.

"I'm gonna have a sandwich. I haven't had any lunch," he said quietly.

I followed him into the kitchen. "I'm awful sorry," I sobbed. "I don't know what's gotten into me."

"I guess we're all jumpy," he mumbled, not paying much attention.

"No, it's more than that with me. It's these snoopy people calling to get the details and things like that. It seems too stupid."

"Look, let's forget it, okay?"

I noticed, for the first time, how red his eyes were. He had been crying. Somehow this also annoyed me and I couldn't keep still. I had to keep talking and hurt him. "But I don't see why we can't act natural about it—Dad wouldn't want us to cry about him. It's selfish because we only feel sorry for ourselves," I persisted.

"Oh, shut up, for heavens sake!" Bob turned on me so harshly that I jumped back. "The details may seem awfully small to you, but they have to be taken care of and I'm the one who has to do

it. So just drop it!"

He hesitated for a minute and then came over to me. "I'm sorry, kid. I didn't mean to bite your head off."

I jerked away from him. Suddenly my eyes got blurry and tears ran down my cheeks. "Just leave me alone!" I cried.

I don't know what time it was when Bob called me to dinner. I washed my face and went down.

While we ate, we kept up a steady stream of conversation. We talked endlessly about common, everyday things, never once mentioning what our thoughts really dwelt on. How could we help thinking of him, of his body and what they were doing to it inside the brightly lighted funeral home? But this curiosity that we couldn't avoid seemed to shame us all so that we refused to meet each other's eyes, knowing we were bound together in our thoughts. After the dishes were done, I excused myself and went back to my quiet, dark room.

I sobbed alone in my room. I was afraid. Suddenly I realized how much my father had done for me and how much I loved him. Against my will, I broke down and cried myself to sleep.

Wednesday afternoon was very hot for spring, and our living room was unbearably stuffy. The eyes of all the assembled family bore down on me. From both sides of the family the relatives had gathered here to wait until time for the funeral. Now they all gazed at me in horrified unanimity.

"Why won't you go to the funeral?" Aunt Mary finally exploded.

"I don't want to see everybody staring at him and at us and trying to see who cries hardest. I don't want to hear the preacher saying stupid things about him."

I had run out of the room. So, now I was standing in my bedroom, looking out of the window, seeing the unmowed grass below and remembering why it wasn't mowed.

Then Bob came in without knocking, and he was the same white-faced stranger of the night before. I looked at him defiantly even though I was afraid.

"Why don't you grow up?" he demanded in a low, raging voice.

"I don't care. I won't go out and make a big show so people will talk about how much I miss him."

"You make me sick," he said in the same tone. "Can't you forget yourself even this once? Can't you stop dramatizing yourself?"

"I'm not!"

"I suppose you don't think this is putting on a show—to shut yourself up in your room like this. To sit up here while the rest of us have to go out and face things—no matter how much we'd like to be alone, too."

"Nobody's making you go."

"Oh, no? Somebody has to do necessary things. We have to keep on living. The world doesn't just stop. And another thing—don't flatter yourself that people come to the funeral just to watch you cry. You're not that important. Whether you know it or not, a lot of people in this town liked Dad, and they're coming to the funeral to show their respect for him, not to look at you. And even if the way they show their respect isn't our way, they mean it, and Dad would want us to appreciate it and be polite to them." He paused for breath.

"I hope you're through," I said.

"I hope you're proud of yourself," Bob answered and went out.

I knew that everything he said was true. I had been thinking of myself all the time. Even at school I had been wondering what people were thinking about me. I lay down on my bed and cried silently.

In a little while I got up and washed and began to dress for the funeral.

CASSANDRA COMMINS, eleventh grade, Glenbrook H. S.  
Virginia Kays, teacher

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### THE KALEIDOSCOPE

Watch a boy using his pocket knife to cut through the cardboard tube of his kaleidoscope. He doesn't know exactly what to expect, but he will ultimately be disappointed. Instead of the colorful symmetry he sees through the top of the scope, he will find bits of glass and a pair of mirrors.

Gaze into the kaleidoscope. Study the pattern inside. You will see a compact hexagon: a complex cluster of varicolored particles. Turn the tube and the design changes.

The Fuhrer stands on a balcony overlooking a sea of faces. So swift and powerful is his oration that the people are inflamed. The tirade of guttural German stops, and the world erupts in a roaring scream of "Heil Hitler!" The scream rises into an incoherent shriek, and the shriek becomes a battle cry.

Confident, the Fuhrer returns to his office as the shouting of the mob echoes through his luxurious quarters. He smiles; his name is honored or feared, as he wishes. World domination will be his in ten years.



But half a decade later the Fuhrer tastes cold oiled metal as he places a Luger against the roof of his mouth and pulls the trigger.

The patterns of the kaleidoscope change. They shift; they are never the same twice. Yet each design has basically the same components.

Through a man named Ford the automobile becomes a nation's plaything. In the early days a young man in his duster and goggles races at twenty miles per hour down the dusty street. The older men shake their collective heads. "This younger generation!" they groan. The women titter, "My, isn't he dashing!" A watering trough appears before the car as the driver concentrates on looking handsome for the townspeople. The result is a crash and a badly embarrassed youth.

A time later another young man is driving down a long straight highway. The ride is as smooth and quiet as fifty years of automotive research can make it. Through the power of three hundred horses the speed mounts. The curve ahead has been made for slower speeds, and the car plummets off the highway into space.

Nothing changes but the time and place and the fact that the second driver didn't have time to be ashamed.

Put a piece of red cellophane over one end of the kaleidoscope and look again. The patterns and designs are distorted and strange. The colors are done in black and shades of red.

The Klansmen have been fortified with swigs from a whiskey bottle. They are ready for anything as they don their white robes. Their main purpose is to do their part to "clean up" the country.

The group moves quietly in the blackness until they stand before a tarpaper-covered shack. The door falls before their blows, and the Negro owner is thrown out into the street.

Now smoke is curling from a heap of paper beside the shack. Soon flames climb the walls, and before long the house is a pillar of roaring fire. In the hellish red light the Negro is kicked and kicked again by the white-robed figures, and a dark quiet form is left in the street.

The Klansmen return home to a restful and dreamless sleep.

As you look inside the kaleidoscope, put your hand over the other end. Watch the patterns fade as you shut out the light.

High officials send communiques back and forth through the high channels of their political world. Messages become insulting, and each nation prepares for total war. Tension mounts, and war fever inflames the world. By mistake, a first missile is fired. In retaliation, the second is fired, and from then on no one keeps the

score. The atom illuminates cities for that fraction of a second before the cities flash into oblivion.

After a time the kaleidoscope becomes boring. Throw it into a box of old toys. Forget the colored patterns and return to the great world outside.

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon and in the stars; and upon earth distress of nations . . . for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory . . . For heaven and earth shall pass away . . ." *Luke 21: 25-33*

JOHN WARD, twelfth grade, Jacksonville H. S.  
Emma Mae Leonhard, teacher

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### SWAMP MAGIC

The wind was like a hunted thing, stealing through the cat-tails, rustling the oak leaves, searching for a shelter from the dark things, night-hidden. Shadows lengthened, broadened, disappeared like furtive imps on a devil's errand.

Beyond the marsh-grass, twisted trees, fantastic shapes from a nightmare land, bent their boughs to catch at the wind. The half-moon was a pale glow where the clouds fled in fear across the sky. Sometimes it was blotted out, erasing crouching shadows, sometimes in full view, painting the swamp with a ghostly-hued brush.

Only the tracks gleamed, a monument to the world of civilization—cold, silver-white metal. Only the railroad-topped ridge, where once live-oaks had pushed their branches against the hungry moon, testified to the encroachment of man.

Suddenly a hot yellow beam pierced the darkness. Far down the tracks the train sped along, obliterating all with its noise and speed and gold-hued light. Past the heart of the marshland, with hissings and rumblings, it roared on its way.

Silence. Then the wind wailed, recording the cry of the swamp as its magic shattered. From a distance, the lonely cry of the train whistle sounded. The moon covered its face with a cloud. Something rustled in the marsh-grass and was gone.

ADENA PETERSON, tenth grade, Moline Senior H. S.  
DeWayne W. Roust, teacher

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### A CHRISTMAS EVE STORY

Every year at Christmas time, the angels in heaven act out the story of the first Christmas. It is a great event for all, and the

birth of Christ is the climax of the wonderful Christmas story. In due order, each angel tries out for a part, and the role of each character is filled by a deserving angel; that is, all except for one part.

The role of the Infant Christ is left vacant, for it is said that the part of the New Born must not be rehearsed.

On Christmas Eve, all the hosts of the heavens assemble in their costumes, ready to enact the First Christmas. The Wisemen, the shepherds, the animals, and the happy parents are there. At an appointed time, St. Peter extends his staff toward earth, and a Christ Child is chosen from the race of men on earth. It is a great honor to be chosen to represent Christ at the Christmas play in heaven.

And that is the story Daddy told me ten years ago when my baby brother was chosen to go to heaven to play the Christ Child on Christmas Eve.

PAT MCFARLAND, twelfth grade, Moline Senior H. S.  
Miss Bess Barnett, teacher

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## ILLINOIS

The very name of our state is a permanent tribute to the early French immigrants who came here in friendly spirit, who lived joyfully with the Indians, and who showed them that friendship meant fairness and respect for another's way of life. The happy relationship between the French and the Indians can be traced back to 1673 when Father Marquette and his group of immigrants in their birchbark canoes entered the Illinois River.

Pere Marquette truly loved living among the Indians in Illinois. He took an interest in their rituals, their costumes, and their religion. At one time he paid the Indians a very high compliment when he wrote in his diary that the Calumet Dance done by his friends was like "a very fine opening of a ballet in France."

So the French and the Indians in Illinois lived together harmoniously. The French soon learned to make delicious wine from the wild grapes they found here. No doubt they shared the wine with their Indian brothers, and one can easily imagine the gay times that they had. These two peoples truly knew the meaning of "la joie de vivre."

The French were willing to make concessions. They adopted the Indians' type of calendar and learned to speak the Indian language, allowing, at the same time, their own speech to be corrupted. Like real brothers the young men of both nations often



wrestled with each other; they hunted and fished together; and, so the accounts say, vied with each other in the game of telling tall tales.

Today as a lasting tribute to the union between the French and the Indians, we have the name of our state. The Indian word "Illiniwek," which means "strong men," has been combined with the French ending "ois" to form the beautiful French-Indian word *Illinois*. The Indians' contribution to the word stands first just as the Indians first lived in this territory.

I salute the friendship between the French and the Indians, which has been permanently kept before us in the name of our state.

MARCIA HUBBARD, twelfth grade, University H. S., Normal  
Miss Ruth Stroud, teacher

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### AUNT MARTHA

"Aunt Martha is coming," is what my mother said. That's what started it all. Those four little words were to mean the total upset of our household. At the time we had no idea what the repercussions of that little sentence were to be.

The day of her arrival dawned clear and beautiful. It was a perfect July day. Mother had us all up by nine o'clock. By two o'clock the house was spotless. It was cleaner than it had been for years.

Now you may ask what is so important about the pending visit of a mere Aunt? Well this aunt was different. Aunt Martha had been looked upon as an old maid at twenty-three, but the family must have been selling her short, for she had snagged a millionaire at forty. The old fellow kicked off a few years ago, and ever since, Aunt Martha has spent her time migrating from one relative to another. She has closed her thirty-room bungalow indefinitely. Each of the lucky ones she visits seems to think she will leave her millions to him, but I think she will outlive them all. At fifty-eight she is more peppy than most of the other relatives at thirty and forty.

Well, to get back to my story, at about two-thirty Mother decided we should get ready to meet Aunt Martha's train. Mother almost had a heart attack when I emerged twenty minutes later in a perfectly lovely pair of red and green plaid bermudas and a red shirt. She wouldn't let me out of my room until I had put on one of those cool-looking summer dresses with an orlon sweater to match.

Aunt Martha was the only person to get off at Richwood, so there was no mistaking the round little lady in the horrible green and brown striped chemise. Mother rushed up and gave her one of those big hugs she always uses when she doesn't know what to say. Preliminary greetings over, we went to collect Aunt Martha's luggage—two cosmetic cases, three small suitcases, and two of those big pullman cases, topped off by something or other that I thought looked suspiciously like a leather-cased tennis racquet.

By the time we got home, Mother had got as far as asking Aunt Martha to speak at the Flower Club, the Woman's Club, and the Ladies Aid. She still had the Sewing Circle and the Richwood Women's Citizen Club to go. Oh, I almost forgot the solo Mother asked her to sing at church, because Mother knew Aunt Martha thought she could sing.

When we got home, Mother showed Aunt Martha to her room (mine, which I had vacated that afternoon, earlier). Then they went back to the living room while I stayed upstairs and changed clothes. When I entered the living room in my burmudas and a striped shirt, Mother just kept giving me dirty looks and shaking her head at me when she thought Aunt Martha wasn't looking. Mother had Aunt Martha looking at picture albums filled with those stuffy family snapshots that a person can't do anything else with. I thought Aunt Martha looked pretty bored, but Mother must have thought she was enjoying herself because she brought out two more albums dating back to the Middle Ages (early nineteen hundreds). Then Mother decided Aunt Martha would like to see my scrapbook. I didn't think she would like Elvis and Ricky, but I obediently got it. When I handed it to Aunt Martha, I realized Mother had meant my poetry scrapbook I had made in English last year, not my scrapbook on movie stars. Well, the damage was done and Mother said something about this modern age and all the silly things the teenagers liked, like movie stars with long hair and sideburns, and things like pizza. This is when Aunt Martha started perking up. She asked all kinds of questions about Ricky and Elvis and pop music and dancing. I was really surprised when she asked me if I liked modern Dixieland or progressive jazz. Mother quickly said that I hadn't gone as far as all that in the crazes of today's youth. Aunt Martha said that was too bad as she had a couple of real cool albums she had thought I would like. This put Mother in her place. She said she would go fix dinner. My little brother piped up with something like: Why did she want to do that? We had dinner at noon—he wanted some supper. Mother got up and left us on that one, with some remark about kids saying the cutest things.

After Mother left, Aunt Martha really loosened up. She asked me if I liked modern dancing and before we knew it she was doing interpretive dances to her progressive jazz albums. When Mother looked in on this, she did go pale.

We finished kind of early that evening and I asked Mother if I could go to the park to play a couple of games of tennis with the gang. Mother didn't act too pleased, but she let me go anyway. When I was getting ready to leave, Aunt Martha came up to me and said in a confidential tone that when my Mother got used to her ways she would like to go with me to play some tennis, although she wasn't too good at it.

Aunt Martha did some of the strangest things that week, like asking for onion pizza for supper one night and wearing rock and roll saddle shoes and putting her hair into a pony tail. But the morning she came downstairs in bright red bermudas and a yellow sweatshirt topped them all. Mother admitted defeat. Aunt Martha went with me to the park to meet the gang. I'll admit I was a little worried at first about how the gang would receive Aunt Martha in her red bermudas, but I needn't have worried about a thing. They accepted her, all two hundred and twenty pounds of her. Her tennis was great considering her size. The boys were captured by her neverending small talk and her witty jokes. They were all calling her Marty inside of an hour's time.

Well, from then on Aunt Martha was in constant demand as a chaperone for parties and picnics and the like. She was more popular than I was. The day Aunt Martha came down in her pink and blue flowered bathing suit, Mother completely gave up trying. She started calling supper, supper, and lunch was once again dinner, to my brother's great amazement and joy.

Well, all good things must come to an end as Aunt Martha's visit did. She said she really hated to go after the seven weeks with us but she was due at Cousin David's house in Chicago.

The day before she left the gang threw a big beach party in Aunt Martha's honor. They were really sad to see her go, and the gang wasn't the same for weeks after. We are all awaiting Christmas vacation because Aunt Martha promised she would come again and we could have some real cool ice skating parties.

The amazing thing about the whole incident was the complete living-room set that arrived the day after Aunt Martha's departure, including a twelve foot sectional sofa and a stereophonic hi-fi record player complete with several pop music albums (even some progressive jazz). Was my mother bowled over? But then that's just Aunt Martha.

JOSEPHINE SIMS, tenth grade, Petersburg H. S.  
Ruth W. Peterson, teacher



### THE COLONEL'S VISITOR

"Yes, Mary Jo," said the good Dr. Thomas, "he slept in your very room when old Colonel Paddock owned this here house. I reckon it musta been quite a thrill to have a visitor like him. I heard of a farmer once that was out huntin' in them woods on a Fourth of July just like today. It got ta be kind of late in the evenin', and by golly, the farmer swore he saw 'im walkin' through the trees with that tall hat on jest as close as from me to you! You take care, Mary Jo, 'cause he might come back tonight for another visit!" said the old gentleman. "Well, I better be gittin' on home now. Thanks so much fer the fine supper, Ellen. Goodnight, Ned, Mary Jo."

"Goodnight, Dr. Thomas," said Mary Jo, her eyes wide and round, "and thank you for the story."

"Sure, missy," chuckled the old doctor. "And if he comes to visit you, you tell 'im hello fer me, huh?"

Mary Jo's father smiled as he closed the door and turned to Mary Jo.

"You'd best be gettin' on up to bed now, little one. This Fourth has been a pretty busy day for you."

"Daddy, did that Colonel Paddock really use to own our house and did he really have such a visitor?"

"Yes, Mary Jo, that's what the records of the city say. Now you scoot on up to bed."

Mary Jo thought about all that Dr. Thomas had said concerning the Colonel's visitor while she put on her pajamas and slipped into bed. She then blew out the candle and snuggled down in the covers. Presently, because she was exhausted from the day's events, she fell fast asleep.

Very shortly, something strange and eerie possessed Mary Jo to sit bolt upright in her bed! She opened her eyes and watched with terror while the closet door on the opposite wall creaked slowly, almost painfully, open. Then a very tall, dark figure walked slowly through the door and across the floor to come to a halt at the foot of her bed. As Mary Jo's eyes became accustomed to the dark, she noted that the man wore a tall hat on his head, and that a long, black frock coat hung loosely unbuttoned from his lean shoulders.

"Who are you?" Mary Jo stuttered.

"Do not be frightened, Mary Jo," said the tall stranger in a kind, deep voice. "I am Abraham Lincoln, the Colonel's visitor. I have come back on this Fourth of July to pay my respects to

this fine old home and this community which I visited. I am going for a walk, Mary Jo. Would you like to accompany me?"

Mary Jo scrambled from beneath the covers and took Mr. Lincoln's outstretched hand. "Mr. Abe," Mary Jo said as she looked up into the man's kindly thin face, "where is your beard?"

Lincoln smiled at this and replied, "I had not yet grown a beard when I came to visit the Colonel, Mary Jo. It was still very early in my career, you see."

By then the tall figure and the small pajama-clad figure had reached the street and began to walk south. Mary Jo was quite plainly surprised.

"Mr. Abe," she cried, "where are all the houses? The doctor's house and all the others—they're gone!"

"They just haven't been built yet, Mary Jo. This area remained open fields for a good many years," he explained.

They soon found themselves standing on a little knoll overlooking Bryant's Woods.

"This spot, Mary Jo, is where I gave one of my campaign speeches against Stephen Douglas. I wasn't the only speaker here that day, not by any means. Some mighty upstanding gentlemen addressed the Fourth of July crowd. Some of the others were Ebenezer Peck, Joe Knox, Owen Lovejoy, the man who operated the underground railroad here, and Governor Will Bissel. The newspaper people figured the crowd must have numbered 10,000."

The two strolled back down the dusty road hand in hand. Suddenly Mr. Lincoln stopped, reached down, and picked up something out of the dust, which he proceeded to brush off and slip into his pocket.

Soon Mary Jo found herself back in her own room looking up into the face of the tall figure before her. Mr. Lincoln took her hand and pressed an object into it saying, "This is something to remind you of the history that happened here, practically in your own back yard. It's what I stopped to pick up back on the road. It was very pleasant to have met you, Mary Jo. Goodby now."

The tall figure walked back across the room and disappeared in the darkness.

"Mary Jo! Mary Jo! It's time for you to get up!"

Mary Jo opened her eyes and shouted down the stairs, "I'm awake, Mother."

Then she thought to herself, "Could it have been only a dream? It was so real!"

Suddenly she realized she was holding something in her hand. Almost not daring to breathe, she opened her fingers, and there

lying in her palm was a bright red and white campaign button with the words ABRAHAM LINCOLN printed across it in bold black letters!

JUDITH PUTTCAMP, eleventh grade, Princeton H. S.  
Donnabelle Fry, teacher

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### THINGS I COULD DO WITHOUT

Fortunately I have no friend so close to me that I feel obliged to act as a model for him, but, friend or no friend, I must perform this duty for my sister. Of course, I always resist and offer what seem to my masculine mind very logical arguments, but in the end I lose, and perform I must.

I can always tell beforehand when an attack of dressmaking is coming on. My sister comes home with large bundles of materials; my mother comes home with a varied assortment of needles, thread, and trimmings; my father oils the sewing machine. As for me, I do not come home at all when it is possible to stay away. Still, one must eat sometimes, and it is then that I am pressed into service.

As a model I am what every other model is not, for I simply cannot stand in one position for more than five minutes. Furthermore, I have much trouble getting into and out of the garments. I can truthfully say that my form, whatever it is, was not made to fit into a dress. The only thing about these dresses that fits is the hem, and even with that I am always afraid to take one natural step lest I stretch it askew.

However, trouble or no trouble, my sister seems to know of no other way in which to make a hem straight except by bullying her younger brother into trying the dress on. And so I stand, sweating in agony, lest I be stabbed with one of the infinite number of pins, or lest someone come in and find me in my undignified position. Were such a thing to happen, I fear that I might not survive the humiliation.

Even the most disagreeable experiences must come to an end, however, and in due time the dress hangs to the satisfaction of its future wearer. But before I can gain my freedom, I must struggle out of it. And let me inform you that there is a decided trick to the process. First, you raise your hands above your head and stretch upward until every bone creaks in its socket; then, you draw in your chin until it seems that you have pushed your Adam's apple to the back of your neck; finally you draw yourself as small and as flat as possible. At this crucial moment, when you feel that you must breathe or burst, someone pulls the dress up over your



ears, taking no heed whatever as to whether your ears are pulled off or not.

Since my sister has taken up dressmaking, I can better appreciate the suffering endured by poor mortals during the Middle Ages. But what are the rack and screws in comparison with the torture of getting into a half-made dress? And what is being roasted alive in comparison with the agony of getting out of a finished one?

JIM HULS, eleventh grade, East High School, Rockford  
Jeanne Claeys, teacher

### FOR THE GLORY OF MANKIND

Somewhere in the cold, black nothingness of the Other World, there stands an inn. It is a large, friendly inn, brightly lit by the fire which crackles cheerfully in the hearth. Here the heroes of all the ages gather to tell their tales of great deeds and great battles, to sing of the valor of their comrades, and to drink to the continuing Glory of the Human Race.

At a table in a corner of the inn sit three men. The first is a dark young Italian, dressed in the short tunic and armor which signify membership in a Roman legion. His sparkling black eyes laugh as he speaks.

"My name is Marcus. I died on a battlefield in Gaul. I was young when I died; my life was cut short before I had lived it. Yet I do not weep for myself, for I died in a good cause. It was through my death that the Roman Empire united the world. I died for the Unity of Mankind."

All raise their glasses to the Unity of Mankind.

The second man is dressed in the untarnished armor of a knight of the Crusades. There are purpose and resolution in his steel-blue eyes.

"My name is Michael. I died in the Holy Land. I, too, died in a good cause, in the attempt to rescue the Holy Land from pagans. I died for the Salvation of Mankind."

All raise their glasses to the Salvation of Mankind.

The third is dressed in the khaki uniform of an American sergeant of the twentieth century. His brown eyes reflect smug satisfaction.

"My name is Mack. I died fighting the Nazis in Germany. I died in a good cause: I died for the Emancipation of Mankind."

All raise their glasses to the Emancipation of Mankind. All save one.

A fourth man has entered the inn and seated himself at the

table. He does not lift his glass with the rest. Instead, he sits staring blankly at the table in front of him, staring with the dead, empty eyes of one who no longer knows laughter, purpose, or satisfaction. His uniform is a drab gray, without insignia, and unlike any other in the vast hall. All shudder as his hollow voice sounds dully through the inn.

"My name is Man. I died fighting myself on the barren battlefields of War. My unity, my salvation, my emancipation are meaningless now; I died for no cause."

The great hall is silent: no glass is lifted, no song is sung. A chill wind sweeps through the inn, and the fire smolders and dies. The cold darkness of the Other World closes in, hiding the skeletons strewn over the chairs and tables, last remnants of the Glory of Mankind.

AARON BLOCH, twelfth grade, Niles Twp. H. S., Skokie  
Priscilla Baker, teacher

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### THE VISIT

The city seemed darker and colder that night six years ago than ever before. I was on my way to see the woman I hadn't seen for eleven years. The night was cold, bitter cold, and the air was still. I walked along a filthy side street. Here and there were the remains of Christmas trees, strewn about under the porches and beside trash cans. A lonely dog whimpered as I trudged by. I crossed a street and stumbled over an empty whiskey bottle which went clanking against the curb, the sound echoing down the street. Then it was quiet again, except for the crunching of the snow under my feet. I rounded the corner onto the avenue and walked on. Passing a drugstore, closed against the cold and the night, I noticed that the thermometer on the "Have a Coke" sign read eighteen degrees. I hunched my shoulders, pushed my overcoat tighter around my neck and pulled the brim of my hat down over my eyes. Somehow the Coke sign just didn't fit into its surroundings. A lonely cop stood on the corner like a statue, his night stick hanging at his side. He must have known that there would be no trouble that night—maybe a drunk or two, but that would be all. I passed a bar and the glow of the lights inside invited me to come in, but I could not stop tonight. Maybe I would stop on my way home, if it was still open when I passed again. I doubted if it would be, for I was on my way to see the woman I hadn't seen for eleven years.

HAROLD HOLMES, twelfth grade, Urbana H. S.  
Marien Seward, teacher

## A BALANCE OF POWER

Ever since Adam told Eve that she was, after all, merely a rib, women have been cursing their misfortune in being born female. As the Neanderthal woman slaved over a raw buffalo carcass, she thought longingly of her mate, stalking through the forest; as the Athenian wife sat, completely bored, in the inner courtyard of her suburban home, she sighed at the image of her husband, proving his mettle on the battlefield. All adventure, stimulation, and conquest were left to men, while the "little woman" was supposed to clean, cook, nag, and have babies.

All this was pretty dismal for women born into a men's world. But through all those centuries of household drudgery, the wives and mothers of ages past felt that somehow, the tide would turn. And it did. Giddy with power, womankind surged past the Apron Curtain. . . .

LAURIE OLIVER, twelfth grade, Waukegan Twp. H. S.  
Sam Filippo, teacher

## HONORABLE MENTION

Bloomington: (Bloomington High School) "The Ideal Teacher," by Rachel David, twelfth grade (Maude M. Leonard, teacher); "Grandma," by Vivian Hillman, twelfth grade (Maude M. Leonard, teacher); "Evenin', Aggie," by Prudence Price, twelfth grade (Lorraine Kuft, teacher); "A Determined Journey," by Judy Rockwell, eleventh grade (Grace Schedel, teacher)

Cambridge: (Cambridge High School) "Debut," by Andrea Lunde, twelfth grade (Elizabeth Westerlund, teacher)

Chicago: (Taft High School) "Just Call Me Margaret," by Rosemary Gerber, eleventh grade (Sander Postol, teacher)

Chicago Heights: (Bloom Township High School) "Christmas?," by Karen Nelson, twelfth grade (Sara J. Fernald, teacher)

Evanston: (Evanston Township High School) "Greek Tragedy, the Morning After," by Mike Chanowitz, eleventh grade (Barbara Pannwitt, teacher); "Henry and the Spanish Test," by Ann Hume, tenth grade (Mary Jane Richeimer, teacher); "Power and Peace," by Jay F. Rosenberg, twelfth grade (Clarence W. Hach, teacher); "The House of Paul," by Diana Staffin, twelfth grade (Ethel Wanselow, teacher)



- Frankfort: (West Frankfort Community High School) "Beware of Old Scratch!" by Angela Marchildon, eleventh grade (Velma O. Nave, teacher)
- Genoa-Kingston: (Genoa-Kingston Community Unit High School) "Edna St. Vincent Millay," by Sue Brush, twelfth grade (Gladys Wibking, teacher); "Imperial Woman," by Mary Margaret Quinn, twelfth grade (Gladys Wibking, teacher)
- Glenbrook: (Glenbrook High School) "The Coercion Towards Mediocrity," by Carl Erickson, twelfth grade (Edna des-Voignes, teacher); "The Horrible Hulies," by Karyn Greenberg, ninth grade (Charles B. Ruggless, teacher); "Canterboogie Tales," by Henry DeZutter, twelfth grade (Wayne Sick, teacher); "Allison," by Tish Skinner, twelfth grade (Jane Britton, teacher)
- Glen Ellyn: (Glenbard High School) "Thoughts at Murfreesboro," by David Stineback, ninth grade (Marian M. Wake, teacher)
- Mendota: (Mendota High School) "Death on a Bright Day," by Jack Kessler, twelfth grade (Stephen Warren, teacher)
- Moline: (Moline Senior High School) "Every Dog Should Have a Man," by Verna Hammond, eleventh grade (Betty Roseberg, teacher); "The Proudest Angel," by Sandy Hogg, twelfth grade (Betty Roseberg, teacher)
- Normal: (University High School) "Mothers," by Daniel J. Greer, twelfth grade (Ruth Stroud, teacher); "He Died as He Had Lived . . .," by Ray Mecherle, twelfth grade (Ruth Stroud, teacher)
- Palatine: (Palatine Township High School) "Early England," by Beverly Kahling, twelfth grade (Wayne M. Pethick, teacher)
- Rantoul: (Eater Junior High School) "Taffy, the Daffy Rabbit," by Sheila Barich, seventh grade (Mary Clifford, teacher)
- Rockford: (East High School) "The Tribulations of a High School English Student," by Sid Kingdon, tenth grade (Jeanne Claeys, teacher)
- Rock Island: (Washington Junior High School) "Pretty Clever," by Anne Hibbard, seventh grade (Gertrude McCreary, teacher)
- Skokie: (Niles Township High School) "The Autopsy Performed on a Teacher of English Literature," by Mike Skol, twelfth grade (Priscilla Baker, teacher)
- Streator: (Streator Township High School) "The Most Beautiful Present," by Janet Dueser, ninth grade (Lucille M. Tkach, teacher)